

# And now, for the Rest of the Story ...

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*In times of war, finding and even sharing a good news story can be extremely difficult. But occasionally, such stories do emerge and renew feelings of hope and peace. During the author's second tour with the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in the Former Yugoslavia from June to December 1994, he had the good fortune to be involved in a number of very positive actions. The following is an account of one such event which began in 1994 but did not end until May 1999. For the author and the family he helped reunite, the "circle" is now complete. — Editor*



From June to December 1994, I was the Station Commander of the UNPROFOR Civilian Police Station at Gorazde, Bosnia. Gorazde was, at that time, a UN Protected enclave southwest of Sarajevo which was completely surrounded by Bosnian Serb forces. Travel in and out of Gorazde required prior approval from Serb authorities in Pale. This journey, normally a one-hour drive, would routinely take about five hours and passage through six Serb checkpoints during the conflict. The soldiers manning these checkpoints seemed to derive some perverse pleasure in holding us at these checkpoints for as long as possible.

Among the various duties of Gorazde CivPol was the facilitation of "social evacuations" from Gorazde. This usually involved the

movement of women, children and the infirm, out of Gorazde to be reunited with family in Sarajevo or other parts of Bosnia-Herzegovina or Serbia. This is the story of one such mission.

On July 16, 1994, I received a request to attend the Serb military base in Kopaci (a small town near Gorazde) where I met the local civil leader, Novica Krunić, and Capt. Popović from the Serb HQ in Pale. Capt. Popović was there on behalf of Gen. Milovanović, the Chief of Staff for the Serb HQ in Pale, who requested that I arrange the evacuation of Amra Abaz from Gorazde to be reunited with her family in Sarajevo. Initially it was believed that Amra was a Serb child because the request came from the Serb HQ. However it was soon discovered that she was in fact a Muslim child. Further discussion revealed that this request had been arranged between the Bosnian Government in Sarajevo and the Serb Government in Pale. It was intimated that there had been direct involvement at the highest levels of both governments.

During the next two weeks I arranged numerous meetings with the civil and military authorities in both Gorazde and Kopaci, and after both had conferred with their respective governments, I eventually obtained approval to transfer Amra to Sarajevo. This approval was in the form of official documents from both sides, as well as my letter for taking responsibility for the transport. An official travel request was submitted to Pale and